



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS
The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of
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Governor Lynch talks with Alstead residents at the Village Fire Station on the first anniversary of the devastating flood that struck their community on October 9th, 2005. Rebuilding the community is continuing and will go on for some time. A church bell tolled at 6:57 a.m. to mark the precise moment the year before when a wall of water tore through the town, washing away homes, businesses and roads. Seven people died in the flooding, which affected five New Hampshire counties.

COMMUNITIES STILL HEALING FROM OCTOBER/MAY FLOODS – There were many signs of progress during the one-year anniversary celebration in Alstead of the October 2005 flood. One dramatic indication was the arrival of a new modular home on a truck. The home, which was hauled in to the accompaniment of a brass band, was built for an Alstead resident by construction trade students at Keene High School. Most people are back in their homes from the October flood, although major work remains to be done to make permanent repairs to roads in the area. One section of Route 123 in Alstead remains one lane, with a traffic light to regulate direction.

A two-week effort by HS&EM field representatives to get a firm number on May flood victims still out of their homes determined that there were still 25 such households in mid-October. These homes need major repairs to foundations, electrical, septic and other systems totaling about \$1.4 million. However, there are still many others who have unmet needs that the Long Term Flood Recovery Steering Committee is also addressing.

VOLUNTEERS TRAIN TO GET THE MOLD OUT – Mold can be an unpleasant surprise left behind by flood waters. Wood, wall boards, carpets and other porous surfaces stay damp long after flood waters have receded and provide an ideal breeding ground for mold. The N.H. Long Term Flood Recovery Program presented a day-long mold remediation course for volunteers at the Manchester Chapter of the American Red Cross on October 18th. About two dozen volunteers took the course, which was taught by Dan Bernazzani, president of Liberty Consulting and a certified microbial inspector.

The training session covered the health and environmental problems caused by mold, inspection and remediation strategies, cleanup and prevention. In addition to the Long Term Flood Recovery Program the training session was supported by the N.H. Office of Energy and Planning, the Department of Environmental Services and local public health agencies.

INTERNATIONAL EM CONFERENCE HELD IN VERMONT - Staff from HS&EM, the Attorney General's Office and the Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Human Services attended the semi-annual meeting of the International Emergency Management Group (IEMG) in Stowe, Vt., October 23rd through the 26th. IEMG is made up of emergency management officials from the New England states and their Canadian counterparts in the Maritime Provinces and Quebec. This meeting concentrated on using the Guidelines and Operations Manual (GOM), which was approved at the May meeting, in a table top exercise. The exercise, with a possible terrorism event of a health-related nature acting as the precipitating event and compounded by a devastating coastal hurricane, not only tested the GOM but also addressed a variety of cross-border issues. The federal counterparts from Canada and the United States were also important players in the day-long exercise.

VERMONT YANKEE SIRENS TO BE TESTED – Emergency sirens in towns surrounding the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant will be tested for three minutes during the first week of November. The sirens, in towns in New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts, will be tested on criteria developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which require a full three-minute sounding once a year. New Hampshire tests will be conducted in Winchester and Swanzey at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 4th and in Hinsdale at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, November 7th. These are the regularly scheduled testing times for the sirens.

Siren tests in the other states may also be audible from some locations in New Hampshire. Bernardston and Northfield, Mass., will conduct their tests at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, November 1st. Vernon, Vt., will conduct its test at 8 a.m. on Saturday, November 4th. Brattleboro, Vt., and Colrain, Mass., will conduct their tests at noon, also on Saturday, November 4th.

PRIVATE SECTOR NEEDS TO PREPARE FOR PANDEMIC – Eighty-five percent of this country’s critical infrastructure is in private hands. That means that the private sector will be deeply involved in responding to a pandemic influenza outbreak in order to keep the economy functioning. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has prepared an 84-page guide for private sector organizations titled “Pandemic Influenza, Preparedness, Response and Recovery: Guide for Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources.” In the introduction to the guide, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff notes that pandemic influenza poses a significant risk to the U.S. and the world, and only the timing, severity and exact strain remain uncertain. The guide is posted at the HS&EM website, www.nhoem.state.nh.us.

SCHOOL ATTACKS FOCUS ATTENTION ON N.H. SCHOOL SAFETY – A lone gunman walked into a one-room school in Lancaster County, Pa.’s Amish country on October 2nd and shot 10 young girls, killing five of them. It was the latest in a recent string of school shootings of students by outsiders that shocked the country and raised questions about school security. There is no way to make a school 100 percent safe from intruders, but most New Hampshire schools have emergency plans that spell out lock-down procedures and entry controls to reduce the likelihood of a school attack. Many schools also have school resource officers to provide a police presence within the building.

Nearly 90 percent of New Hampshire schools have taken Emergency Management’s Comprehensive Emergency Management Planning for Schools, or CEMPS, program. ns

CONFERENCE HELPS EMERGENCY PLANNERS USE VOLUNTEERS – What to do with volunteers who show up to help during a disaster is one of those great unresolved issues in emergency management. Volunteers who are organized and trained can be a valuable resource, but untrained, spontaneous volunteers who show up at a disaster scene on their own will probably just get in the way and can become victims themselves. A two-day workshop, held October 3rd and 4th at the American Red Cross chapter house in Concord, was aimed at people who manage volunteers, helping them to make volunteers as productive as possible.

About 30 attended, representing the Public Health Network, United Ways, religious organizations, Red Cross and others. The events included a tabletop exercise on responding to a major infectious disease outbreak.